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# Security Council

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## Letter dated 25 January 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to inform you that, during its presidency of the Security Council in February 2001, Tunisia intends to organize on 5 February a debate, open to States which are not members of the Council, on the topic "Peace-building: towards a comprehensive approach". This debate will precede the Fourth United Nations/Regional Organizations High-level Meeting which you are organizing on 6 and 7 February 2001, the topic of which is cooperation for peace-building.

Peace-building continues to be the subject of increasingly intense debate within the United Nations. Since the early 1990s, there has been a growing awareness of the close link between conflict prevention and peace-building. It is now commonly acknowledged that in order to build a durable peace, it is essential to adopt an integrated strategy aimed both at tackling the manifold causes of conflicts and at preventing the resumption of a conflict after peace has been achieved. Any conflict-prevention and peace-building action must be designed to last.

The attached note (see annex) could serve as a working paper on the topic of peace-building and suggests certain specific points which could be discussed in greater detail by participants in the debate.

I hope that the debate will permit a fruitful exchange of ideas on the concept of peace-building and further reflection on the close links between conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peace-building, as well as on the interdependence between peace, security and development. The role of regional organizations is particularly important from this standpoint.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and the attached note distributed as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Said Ben **Mustapha**

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## Annex to the letter dated 25 January 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

# Peace-building: Towards a comprehensive approach

### I. Introduction

The issue of peace-building continues to be the subject of increasingly intense debate within the United Nations. Since the early 1990s, there has been a growing awareness of the close link between conflict prevention and peace-building.

Peace-building calls for an integrated strategy comprising a series of actions on various fronts: political, military, diplomatic, economic, social and institutional and other imponderables which together form a coherent social context conducive to the peaceful resolution of conflicts.

Preserving the gains of a peace agreement that has ended a conflict and ensuring the stability of a country require sustained action to address the root causes of the conflict.

The public debate in the Security Council on 5 February 2001 will provide an opportunity for the international community to reaffirm its political will and its commitment to define a common approach to peace-building and to work towards a comprehensive strategy for peace-building and conflict prevention in which the United Nations and regional organizations can play complementary roles.

### II. Concept of peace-building

Peace-building is a concept which embodies a range of actions to identify, establish and support structures for strengthening and consolidating peace.

This concept has been the subject of intense debate within the United Nations since the publication of *An Agenda for Peace* (June 1992) and the *Supplement to an Agenda for Peace* (January 1995). Those documents stated, in particular, that the concept of peace-building does not only apply to post-conflict situations but also covers measures which can be taken to prevent a conflict from breaking out in the first place and measures which can be taken during a conflict to facilitate the peace process.

It is also acknowledged that peace-building requires a comprehensive, integrated approach, in that it must give priority to addressing the underlying structural causes of conflict, namely, insufficient or, in some cases, non-existent economic, social and political development. This means that determined, sustained action must be taken to promote development in all its dimensions.

Several reports by the Secretary-General have underlined the importance of conflict prevention and peace-building, among them the 1997 report on "Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform", the 13 April 1998 report entitled "The causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa" and, more recently, the Millennium report entitled "We the peoples; the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century".

The report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (A/55/305-S/2000/809) also looked at the questions raised by post-conflict peace-building.

Given the complexity of the maintenance of international peace and security in its broadest sense, complementarity among the respective roles of all participants must be ensured in preparing and implementing a comprehensive, universally agreed strategy.

Such a strategy calls for positive interaction between the mandates and roles of the various organs of the United Nations, as defined in the Charter, and those of the agencies of the United Nations system. It is essential to maintain and further strengthen the contribution of regional organizations and international financial institutions to this collective endeavour.

The Security Council, meeting at the level of Heads of State and Government in September 2000, pledged "to enhance the effectiveness of the United Nations in addressing conflict at all stages from prevention to settlement to post-conflict peace-building" (resolution 1318 (2000)).

The debates of the Security Council in 1998, 1999 and 2000 on peace-building, conflict prevention and strategies for emerging from conflict situations, and the statements by the President of the Council adopted at the end of those debates, emphasized the importance of a coordinated international approach to eliminating the root causes of armed conflicts and the need for a comprehensive peace-building strategy involving all the actors concerned, including United Nations agencies and programmes, regional and subregional organizations and international financial institutions.

## III. Security Council debate

Contributions to the debate planned for February 2001 could focus on the various aspects of peace-building, the problems involved and the role of the United Nations system and other international actors:

### A. Peace-building

#### 1. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants

The success of such a process, whose importance is now universally recognized, depends on adequate, predictable, assured and timely funding. That is the best investment that can be made for peace.

The implementation of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes must be facilitated, inter alia, by giving demobilized former combatants occupational training and by developing income- and employment-generating projects for them. Particular attention should also be paid to the situation of child soldiers (role of the United Nations, its specialized agencies, international financial institutions, multilateral organizations and other partners).

The Council has devoted two public debates to this issue — on 8 July 1999 (see S/PV.4020) and 23 March 2000 (see S/PV.4118) — and two statements by its President (S/PRST/1999/21 and S/PRST/2000/10). At the Council's request, the Secretary-General submitted a report on the issue (S/2000/101 of 11 February 2000). The Security Council has underlined "the necessity of a clear definition of tasks and

division of responsibilities among all actors involved in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process". In its 23 March 2000 statement (S/PRST/2000/10), the Council recognized that "the mandates of peacekeeping missions increasingly include oversight of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration as one of their functions", this task having proved to be an essential component of peacekeeping.

Combating the illicit traffic in arms is also a very important part of this effort, given the risks which this traffic poses to any peace-building effort.

### 2. Refugees and displaced persons

Refugees and displaced persons are the primary victims of conflicts and must be the first to benefit from their settlement. Concerted action is needed to prevent:

- Massive, disorganized returns which have destabilizing effects;
- The maintenance of refugee camps beyond the borders of the State concerned, which could become sources of tension;
- The refugee problem having an impact on host countries.

It goes without saying that repatriation and resettlement of refugees and displaced persons are more likely to succeed when carried out in the context of efforts to revive economic activity and repair the social fabric. Otherwise, there is a risk that the problem will simply be transferred and that international assistance will have to continue, and that insecurity and social tensions will develop that could have potentially destabilizing consequences in the future.

### 3. Poverty eradication and promotion of sustainable development

According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), many new conflicts are considered to be complex emergencies in development terms. Of the 34 countries which are farthest from achieving the international development goals set at the United Nations conferences held over the past 10 years, 22 are, or were recently, victims of conflict. Of the 27 major conflicts recorded in 1999, 25 were civil wars.

At the Millennium Summit, the Heads of State and Government emphasized the importance of analysing the root causes of conflict. They underscored the close link between peace and development and stressed that poverty and underdevelopment are among the main contributing factors to conflict and that, accordingly, efforts and a commitment by the international community to reduce world poverty and promote sustainable development are a step towards conflict prevention and a contribution to peace-building.

The heads of State and Government resolved to create an environment — at the national and global levels alike — which is conducive to development and to the elimination of poverty.

In its resolution 1318 (2000) adopted on the occasion of the Millennium Summit, the Security Council "strongly encourages the development within the United Nations system and more widely of comprehensive and integrated strategies to address the root causes of conflicts, including their economic and social dimensions".

Blatant inequalities and rising unemployment find fertile ground in poverty and exacerbate the impact of exclusion and marginalization, which are sources of tension and conflict. Eradicating world poverty in the age of globalization is a collective responsibility which calls for increased solidarity and sustained, collective action on the part of the international community, for instance by strengthening existing strategies and mechanisms and developing innovative, flexible, rapid-impact tools to respond to the urgency of certain situations.

### 4. Strengthening the rule of law and democratic institutions

The establishment of democratic institutions and the promotion of human rights and good governance are two areas of action for preventing conflicts and avoiding their resurgence. Promotion of democratization, establishment of the rule of law, respect for human rights, tolerance, dialogue and reconciliation thus have an important role to play in peace-building and are at the basis of the relationship between peace, security and development.

In fact, there can be no real peace without economic and social development, just as there can be no sustainable development without security and without peace, whether within individual countries, within regions or worldwide.

## B. Comprehensive peace-building strategy

Peace-building requires a comprehensive, integrated strategy involving all international partners (United Nations system, international financial institutions, regional and subregional organizations) and the State concerned, taking into account the circumstances specific to each situation.

### 1. What role can the Security Council play?

Under Article 24 of the Charter of the United Nations, the Security Council has primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. To further enhance the effectiveness of its role in this area, the Security Council can act as the international community's catalyst for increasing interest in, and securing a resolute commitment to, genuinely meeting the demands of peace-building, particularly post-conflict peace-building.

In recent years, the Security Council has included peace-building components in the mandates of peacekeeping operations. This is true of the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic (MINURCA) in the Central African Republic, the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) in Cambodia, the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium (UNTAES) in Croatia, the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) in Kosovo and the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) in East Timor. Offices or missions in support of peace-building programmes have also taken over from peacekeeping missions (in Liberia, the Central African Republic, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti and Tajikistan).

As soon as preparations for a peacekeeping operation begin, consultations should be held among the principal organs concerned with a view to devising a peace-building strategy and mobilizing the necessary resources.

Such consultations between the Security Council and all the bodies involved in peace-building, as well as the coordinating role to be played by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, should, while respecting mandates and spheres of competence, aim to develop peace-building strategies which will:

- Specify the responsibilities of each participant;
- Ensure close coordination among all actors;
- Establish a timetable for the implementation of programmes;
- Ensure, to the extent possible, the availability of funding, particularly funding based on voluntary contributions;
- Incorporate the necessary peace-building components in the peacekeeping operation and ensure, within a reasonable period of time, the smoothest possible transition between the peacekeeping and peace-building phases.

**2. What role can other actors play?**

There are several actors concerned with peace-building. Since their priorities differ, greater coordination and consultation are needed in order to design a comprehensive, integrated peace-building strategy. If it is to succeed, such a strategy will require:

- Sustained, determined political will;
- Mobilization of the necessary resources.

Action by the international community must translate rapidly into tangible improvements in the daily lives of populations emerging from a conflict.

The international community's active support for peace-building efforts is essential for maintaining the momentum of peace activities. It would therefore be useful to look at ways of mobilizing more effectively the political will and the resources necessary for peace-building. How can the United Nations system, donors and regional organizations cooperate towards this end?